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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

National Intelligence Officers

24 July 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

VIA: Deputy Director for National Foreign Assessment
National Intelligence Officer for Warning

FROM: Robert C. Ames
National Intelligence Officer for Near East
and South Asia

SUBJECT: Monthly Warning Assessment: Near East and South Asia

1. India. Continued political unrest is likely through the summer; it is possible that no stable government will emerge for months or even years to come. A prolonged period of political instability could challenge democratic processes, and the military might eventually be tempted to intervene. The collapse of a ruling majority government is a new development in 30 years of Indian parliamentary democracy. The long term results of this development are uncertain. A short term result which is virtually certain, however, is the reversal of Desai's policy against the development of nuclear weapons. Prime Minister Desai was the only impediment to an Indian nuclear weapons program; his weakness/removal combined with concern about neighboring Pakistan's nuclear program makes resumption of an Indian program almost certain.

2. Pakistan. The economic situation in Pakistan is bad and growing worse. Opposition elements are becoming more active, insulting the MLA though not outrightly challenging it yet. They are exploiting the relaxation of restrictions prior to the November elections. There is terrible fragmentation in Pakistan, and we see no good at all coming from the elections -- if, indeed, they are held at all. Violence is probable.

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3. PL0 Terrorism. We expect an increase in international terrorism by Palestinian groups, even though Arafat (Fatah) is not involved. Arafat does not control Saiqa, the PFLP, and other radical groups, and there is strong competition for leadership with the PLO. Moreover, certain provocations -- e.g., a "Litani II" operation by Israel -- may circumscribe Arafat's options to the extent that he feels he has no choice but to resume terrorism against Egyptian and US targets. ☐

5. Iraq. The introduction of T-72 tanks to Iraq must be seen as a destabilizing element in the Arab-Israeli military balance. The laminate frontal armor of the T-72 provides much improved protection and could defeat both Israeli tank guns and anti-tank guided missiles (e.g., the TOW missile). ☐

6. Developments in Areas of Continuing Concern

a. Western Sahara. The following recent events cause us concern: The OAU call for a referendum in Western Sahara, the Polisario ending of the year-long cease-fire in Mauritania, and the renewed Polisario claims to portions of southern Morocco. Although the "hot pursuit" option into Algeria which we mentioned last month seems to remain an empty threat by Hassan, there is increased likelihood of political instability in both Mauritania and Morocco.

b. Syrian Internal Unrest. The continued inability of Assad's security forces to come to grips with the attacks reinforces the concern we discussed last month.

c. The Yemens. No change from last month: The four-month period for unity talks ends on 30 July. We are concerned that NDF activity may resume then or shortly after Ramadan. The Salih regime is insecure even without a renewed threat from the NDF and/or the PDRY.

d. Afghanistan. The new element in Afghan turmoil is the prospect of a Soviet-backed coup to install, ironically, a less conspicuously Soviet-inclined government. By changing the government in this way, however, the Soviets may not get the stability they seek. ☐

Robert C. Ames
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(TCS-2372-79)

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